Numb. CCCXXXIX.

The SPECTATOR.

——Ut his exordia primis
Omnia & ipse tener Mundi concreverit orbis.
Tum durare solum, & discludere Nerea ponto
Cæperit, & rerum paullatim sumere formas. Ovid.

Saturday, March 29. 1712.

LONGINUS has observed, that there may be a Loftiness in Sentiments, where there is no Passion, and brings Instances out of Ancient Authors to support this his Opinion. The Pathetick, as that great Critick observes, may animate and inflame the Sublime, but is not essential to it. Accordingly, as he further remarks, we very often find that those, who excell most in stirring up the Passions, very often want the Talent of Writing in the Great and Sublime manner; and so on the contrary. *Milton* has shewn himself a Master in both these ways of Writing. The Seventh Book, which we are now entering upon, is an Instance of that Sublime, which is not mixt and work'd up with Passion. The Author appears in a kind of composed and sedate Majesty; and tho' the Sentiments do not give so great Emotion as those in the former Book, they abound with as magnificent Ideas. The Sixth Book, like a troubled Ocean, represents Greatness in Confusion; the Seventh affects the Imagination like the Ocean in a Calm, and fills the Mind of the Reader without producing in it any thing like Tumult or Agitation.

The Critick abovementioned, among the Rules which he lays down for succeeding in the Sublime way of Writing, proposes to his Reader, that he should imitate the most celebrated Authors who have gone before him, and have been engaged in Works of the same nature; as in particular that he writes on a Poetical Subject, he should consider how *Homer* would have spoken on such an Occasion. By this means one great Genius often catches the Flame from another, and writes in his Spirit, without copying servilely after him. There are a thousand Shining Passages in *Virgil*, which have been lighted up by *Homer*.

Milton, though his own natural Strength of Genius was capable of furnishing out a perfect Work, has doubtless very much raised and ennobled his Conceptions, by such an Imitation as that which *Longinus* has recommended.

In this Book, which gives us an Account of the Six Days Works, the Poet received but very few Assistances from Heathen Writers, who were Strangers to the Wonders of Creation. But as there are many Glorious Strokes of Poetry upon this Subject in Holy Writ, the Author has numberless Allusions to them through the whole Course of this Book. The great Critick, I have before mentioned, tho' a Heathen, has taken notice of the Sublime manner in which the Law-giver of the *Jews* has described the Creation in the First Chapter of *Genesis*; and there are many other Passages in Scripture, which rise up to the same Majesty, where this Subject is toucht upon. *Milton* has shewn his Judgment very remarkably, in making use of such of these as were proper for his Poem, and in duly qualifying those high Parts of Eastern Poetry, which were suited to Readers whose Imaginations were set to an higher pitch than those of colder Climates.

Adam's Speech to the Angel, wherein he desires an Account of what had passed within the Regions of Nature before his Creation, is very great and solemn. The following Lines, in which he tells him that the Day is not too far spent for him to enter upon such a Subject, are exquisite in their kind.

And the Great light of day yet wants to run
Much of his race though steep, suspens in Heav'n
Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears,
And longer will delay to hear thee tell
His Generation, &c.——

The Angel's encouraging our first Parent in a modest pursuit after Knowledge, with the Causes which he assigns for the Creation of the World, are very just and beautiful. The Messiah, whom, as we are told in Scripture, the Heavens were to receive, comes forth in the Power of his Father, surrounded with a Host of Angels, and cloathed with such a Majesty as becomes his entering upon a Work, which, according to our Conceptions, looks like the utmost exertion of Omnipotence. What a beautiful Description has our Author built upon that Hint in one of the Prophets. *And behold there came four Chariots out from between two Mountains, and the Mountains were Mountains of Brass.*

About his Chariot numberless were pour'd
Cherub and Seraph, *Potentates and Thrones,*
And virtues, winged Spirits, and Chariots wing'd,
From the Armoury of God, where stand of old
Myriads between two brazen mountains lodg'd
Against a solemn day, harnest at hand;
Celestial Equipage; and now came forth
Spontaneous, for within them spirit liv'd
Attendant on their lord: Heav'n open'd wide
Her ever-during Gates, Harmonious sound
On golden Hinges moving——

I have before taken notice of these Chariots of God, and of these Gates of Heaven, and shall here only add, that *Homer* gives us the same Idea of the latter as opening of themselves, tho' he afterwards takes off from it, by telling us, that the Hours first of all removed those prodigious heaps of Clouds which lay as a Barrier before them.

I do not know any thing in the whole Poem more Sublime than the Description which follows, where the Messiah is represented at the head of his Angels, as looking down into the *Chaos*, calming its Confusion, riding into the midst of it, and drawing the first Out-Line of the Creation.

On Heav'nly ground they stood, and from the shore
They view'd the vast immeasurable Abyss
Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
And surging waves, as Mountains to assault
Heav'ns height, and with the Center mix the Pole.
Silence ye troubled waves, and thou Deep, Peace,
Said then th' Omnific word, your Discord end:
Nor staid, but on the wings of Cherubim
Up-lifted, in Paternal Glory rode
Far into Chaos, *and the world unborn;*
For Chaos *heard his voice: him all his train*
Follow'd in bright Procession to behold
Creation, and the wonders of his might.
Then staid the fervid wheels, and in his hand
He took the golden Compasses, prepared
In Gods eternal Store, to circumscribe
This Universe, and all created things:
One foot he Center'd, and the other turn'd,
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,
This be thy just Circumference, O World.

The Thought of the Golden Compasses is conceiv'd altogether in *Homer*'s Spirit, and is a very noble Incident in this wonderful Description. *Homer*, when he speaks of the Gods, ascribes to them several Arms and Instruments with the same greatness of Imagination. Let the Reader only peruse the Description of *Minerva*'s *Ægis*, or Buckler, in the Fifth Book, with her Spear, which could overturn whole Squadrons, and her Helmet, that was sufficient to cover an Army, drawn out of an hundred Cities: The Golden Compasses, in the above-mentioned Passage appear a very natural Instrument in the Hand of him, whom *Plato* somewhere calls the Divine Geometrician. As Poetry delights in cloathing abstracted Ideas in Allegories and sentible Images, we find a magnificent Description of the Creation form'd after the same manner in one of the Prophets, wherein he describes the Almighty Architect as measuring the Waters in the hollow of his Hand, meting out the Heavens with his Span, comprehending the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, weighing the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance. Another of them describing the Supreme Being in this great Work of Creation, represents him as laying the Foundations of the Earth, and stretching a Line upon it. And in another place as garnishing the Heavens, stretching out the North over the empty place, and hanging the Earth upon nothing. This last noble Thought *Milton* has expres'd in the following Verse.

And Earth self-ballanc'd on her Center hung.

The Beauties of Description in this Book lie so very thick, that it is impossible to enumerate them in this Paper. The

Poet has employed on them the whole Energy of our Tongue. The ſeveral great Scenes of the Creation riſe up to view one after another, in ſuch a manner that the Reader ſeems preſent at this wonderful Work, and to aſſiſt among the Quires of Angels, who are the Spectators of it. How glorious is the Concluſion of the firſt Day.

——Thus was the firſt day Ev'n and Morn.
Nor paſt uncelebrated, nor unſung
By the Celeſtial Quires when Orient light
Exhaling firſt from Darkneſs they beheld;
Birth-day of Heav'n and Earth; with joy and ſhout
The hollow univerſal Orb they fill'd.

We have the ſame elevation of Thought in the third Day, when the Mountains were brought forth, and the Deep was made.

Immediately the mountains huge appear
Emergent, and their broad bare backs up heave
Into the Clouds, their tops aſcend the Sky.
So high as heav'd the tumid hills, ſo low
Down ſunk a hollow bottom broad and deep,
Capacious bed of Waters ——

We have alſo the riſing of the whole vegetable World deſcribed in this Day's Work, which is fill'd with all the Graces that other Poets have laviſhed on their Deſcriptions of the Spring, and leads the Reader's Imagination into a Theatre equally ſurprizing and beautiful.

The ſeveral Glories of the Heav'ns make their appearance on the Fourth Day.

Firſt in his Eaſt the glorious lamp was ſeen
Regent of day, and all th' Horizon round
Inveſted with bright rays, jocond to run
His Longitude through Heav'ns high rode: the Gray
Dawn, and the Pleiades before him danced
Shedding ſweet influence: leſs bright the moon,
But oppoſite in level'd Weſt was ſet,
His Mirror, with full face borrowing her light
From him, for other light ſhe needed none
In that aſpect, and ſtill that diſtance keeps
Till night; then in the Eaſt her turn ſhe ſhines
Revolv'd on Heav'ns great Axle, and her reign
With thouſand leſſer lights dividual holds,
With thouſand thouſand ſtars, that then appear'd
Spangling the Hemiſphere ——

One would wonder how the Poet could be ſo conciſe in his Deſcription of the Six Days Works, as to comprehend them within the bounds of an Epiſode, and at the ſame time ſo particular, as to give us a lively Idea of them. This is ſtill more remarkable in his Account of the Fifth and Sixth Day, in which he has drawn out to our view the whole Animal Creation, from the Reptil to the Behemoth. As the Lion and the Leviathian are two of the nobleſt Productions in this World of living Creatures, the Reader will find a moſt exquiſite Spirit of Poetry, in the Account which our Author gives us of them. The Sixth Day concludes with the Formation of Man, upon which the Angel takes occaſion, as he did after the Battel in Heaven, to remind *Adam* of his Obedience, which was the principal Deſign of this his Viſit.

The Poet afterwards repreſents the Meſſiah returning into Heaven, and taking a Survey of his great Work. There is ſomething inexpreſſibly Sublime in this Part of the Poem, where the Author deſcribes that great Period of Time, fill'd with ſo many Glorious Circumſtances; when the Heavens and the Earth were finiſhed; when the Meſſiah aſcended up in Triumph through the Everlaſting Gates; when he look'd down with pleaſure upon his new Creation; when every Part of Nature ſeemed to rejoice in its Exiſtence; when the Morning Stars ſang together, and all the Sons of God ſhouted for Joy.

So Ev'n and Morn accompliſh'd the Sixth day:
Yet not till the Creator from his Work
Deſiſting, tho' unwearied, up return'd,
Up to the Heav'n of Heav'ns his high abode,
Thence to behold this new created world
Th' addition of his empire; how it ſhew'd
In proſpect from his throne, how good, how fair
Anſwering his great Idea. Up he rode
Follow'd with acclamation and the Sound
Symphonious of ten thouſand harps that tun'd
Angelic Harmonies: the earth, the air
Reſounded, (thou remember'ſt, for thou heard'ſt)
The Heavens and all the Conſtellations rung,
The Planets in their Station liſt'ning ſtood,
While the bright pomp aſcended jubilant.
Open ye everlaſting gates, they ſung,
Open, ye Heav'ns, your living doors, let in
The great Creator from his work return'd
Magnificent, his ſix days work, a World.

I cannot conclude this Book upon the Creation, without mentioning a Poem which has lately appeared under that Title. The Work was undertaken with ſo good an Intention, and is executed with ſo great a Maſtery, that it deſerves to be looked upon as one of the moſt uſeful and noble Productions in our *Engliſh* Verſe. The Reader cannot but be pleaſed to find the Depths of Philoſophy enlivened with all the Charms of Poetry, and to ſee ſo great a Strength of Reaſon, amidſt ſo beautiful a Redundancy of Imagination. The Author has ſhewn us that Deſign in all the Works of Nature, which neceſſarily leads us to the Knowledge of its firſt Cauſe. In ſhort, he has illuſtrated, by numberleſs and inconteſtable Inſtances, that Divine Wiſdom, which the Son of *Sirach* has ſo nobly aſcribed to the Supreme Being in his Formation of the World, when he tells us, that *He created her, and ſaw her, and numbered her, and poured her out upon all his Works.*

ADVERTISEMENTS.

At the Deſire of ſeveral Ladies of Quality,

By Her Majeſty's Company of Comedians,

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane, this preſent Saturday, the 29th Day of March, will be preſented a new Tragedy call'd, The Diſtreſt Mother. By Her Majeſty's Command no Perſons are to be admitted behind the Scenes. And on Monday next will be preſented a Play called Philaſter, or Love lies a Bleeding. Written by Beaumont and Fletcher. For the Benefit of Mr. Mills.

AT the Queen's Theatre in the Hay-Market, this preſent Saturday, being the 29th of March, will be performed an Opera called Hydaſpes, the Part of Darius to be perform'd by Signor Benedetti Baldaſſari, Servant to his Highneſs the Elector Palatine, newly arriv'd. Boxes 8 s. Pit 5 s. Firſt Gallery 2 s. 6 d. Upper Gallery 1 s. 6 d. Boxes upon the Stage half a Guinea each. To begin exactly at ſix. By her Majeſty's Command no Perſons are to be admitted behind the Scenes.

By the Deſire of ſeveral Ladies.

AT Punch's Theatre in the Little Piazza, Covent-Garden, this preſent Saturday, will be preſented at 12 a-Clock at Noon, the late New Opera that was by Subſcription, called, The Generous Sacrifice. All the Figures being New, and their Dreſſes agreeable to their Characters. With a new Piece of Machinary after the Britiſh Manner, contrived and juſt finiſhed by Powell, which repreſents a Paradice wonderful Surpriſing. And a new Prologue ſpoken by Powell by way of Ænigma, which gives a Deſcription of Punch's Family. The Tickets to be taken at the Door of the ſaid Theatre at half a Crown each, with Wax Candles throughout the Theatre. To be acted as uſual at Night. Beginning exactly at ſix. Boxes 2 s. 6 d. Pit 1 s. 6 d. No Money to be return'd after the Curtain is Drawn up.

Lately Publiſh'd,

Creation. A Philoſophical Poem. Demonſtrating the Exiſtence and Providence of a God. In Seven Books. By Sir Richard Blackmore, Knt. M. D. and Fellow of the College of Phyſicians in London. Printed for S. Buckley, at the Dolphin in Little Britain; and J. Tonſon, at Shakeſpear's Head over againſt Catherine-ſtreet in the Strand.

Juſt Publiſhed,

The Diſtreſt Mother. A Tragedy. As it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. By her Majeſty's Servants. Written by Mr. Phillips. Printed for S. Buckley at the Dolphin in Little-Britain, and J. Tonſon at Shakeſpear's Head over againſt Catherine ſtreet in the Strand.

This Day is Publiſhed,

The Reaſonableneſs of Conformity to the Church of England, in two parts, with the Defence of it, and the Perſwaſive to Lay-Conformity, the third Edition. To which is added, the Brief Defence of Epiſcopal Ordination; together with the Reply to the Introduction to the ſecond Part, and a Poſtſcript relating to the third Part of Mr. Calamy's Non-Conformity. By Benj. Hoadly, A. M. Rector of St. Peter's Poor. Printed for James Knapton at the Crown in St. Paul's Church-yard. N. B. That the two former Editions were Sold for 10 s. 6 d. price now but 6 s. Where alſo may be had Mr. Hoadly's Diſcourſes concerning the Terms of Acceptance with God, as they are propoſed to Chriſtians in the New Teſtament, and ſeveral Falſe Notions of the Conditions of Salvation conſider'd.

Mr. Paul Girard, at the 3 Flower de Luces, at Charing-Croſs near Northumberland-Houſe, hath lately received from a Friend of his in Italy, a ſmall Quantity of very rich Diſtilled Waters, made by Trofeme Ribequi, Diſtiller to his Royal Highneſs the Duke of Savoy. Every Chaſt containing 24 Bottles (3 of which is a full Quart) and conſiſts only of the 4 moſt Select Sorts (i. e.) Millefleur, Orangiar, Burgermot, and Perſicot, and are all of a double Spirit, and drown off in the ſame manner as the Citron Waters of Barbadoes, which they excel in every Quality, and may be ſeen every Day at the Houſe of the ſaid Mr. Paul Girard, and are ſold by him in order for a quick Sale only at 3 Guineas per Cheſt. N. B. There hath been none of this in England, except in Preſents, theſe 5 Years paſt.

LONDON: Printed for *Sam. Buckley*, at the *Dolphin* in *Little-Britain*; and Sold by *A. Baldwin* in *Warwick-Lane*; where Advertiſements are taken in; as alſo by *Charles Lillie*, Perfumer, at the Corner of *Beauford-Buildings* in the *Strand*.